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RATTLER ON THE MURDOCK

POWER PLANT FLUME

Franklin Dewey Foster was known as "Dude" and Superintendant at the old Murdock Power Plant at Hailstone. He was a compassionate man and continued to find some kind of work to keep some of his men busy and able to buy food for their families.

One day he told Rex Blackley to put three such young men to work cleaning out willows and weeds along several spots along <sup>the</sup> 3½ mile Oregon Fir flume east of that Murdock Plant. These young men were Keith Hansen, Emmett Miller and Max Foster. Rex was their foreman.

Well, as mischief oftens crops out in young men's minds, so it did that day. They caught a sizeable 6<sup>4</sup>-rattle diamond back. They nailed him by the tail to the top of the east end of the trestle supporting the old wooden flume over a gully. This they did to frighten the next daily flume walker, whose duty it was to find leaks in the flume and caulk those leaks by pounding "oakum" into the cracks with a special caulking tool and a hammer.

Rex Blackley was the next flume walker. He walked the flume over the gully and trestle and nearly got to the other (east) side and saw the rattlesnake squirming and hissing and striking. Of course, he jumped and landed down in the gully 15 feet off his perch from on top of the flume. It's a wonder he didn't break a leg or an arm or his head.

Needless to say, Rex scrambled out of the gully and on east on the flume and found one of their shovels and chopped that snake into several pieces. His furor had not dissipated yet. He walked on east on the flume and found the culprits; shouting "You'll learn to set a snake out for me, you're fired!"

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Soon they reported back to the big boss, at the plant; the Superintendant, and coweringly retold the story as to why they came for their severance pay. Rex said nothing, but soon rehired the same lads for another stint and probably another prank.

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